National Nuclear Security Administration
U.S. Department of Energy

Fact Sheet

Media contact: Bryan Wilkes
(202) 586-7371

NNSA Security Upgrades at Russian Sites Are Ahead of Schedule

U.S. has secured more dangerous nuclear material in Russia than ever before

The Bush administration has accelerated and expanded its programs to secure Russian nuclear materials and weapons. Ongoing efforts by the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA) to secure nuclear material, nuclear weapons, and nuclear facilities in Russia form a central element of this plan. Few government programs are more directly connected to denying terrorists the materials they need for assembling nuclear weapons.

Securing Dangerous Materials Faster

- Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham has accelerated by two years the schedules for completing security upgrades for both Russian naval facilities (2006) and 600 metric tons of fissile material mostly at weapons production facilities around the country (2008). NNSA has intensified efforts to negotiate contracts, to eliminate bureaucratic obstacles in Russia and the U.S., and to install new security systems more rapidly.

Expanding Security Programs

- NNSA has expanded the scope of its programs to include the Russian Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF) and radiological sources that could be used in "dirty bombs." The Russian Strategic Rocket Forces has custody of nuclear warheads. NNSA started a pilot program with the SRF two years ago, and is now working at 17 SRF sites across Russia.

NNSA will Complete Securing These Materials by 2008

- NNSA's aggressive plan to accelerate security started with securing the most vulnerable sites first. These tended to be the smaller sites. The larger sites that remain to be secured in Russia are fewer in number but contain significant amounts of nuclear material. These remaining sites can be secured with roughly the same amount of time and effort as previously completed sites containing much less material. As a result, NNSA will secure much more material per year as the remaining sites are addressed.

- NNSA has already made dramatic progress in securing sites. Security improvements at nearly 70 percent of the Russian sites are complete. By the end of 2005, more than 80 percent will be complete.

- Some private reports suggest that at current rates of securing material, the program will take an additional thirteen years to complete. This is simply incorrect, because the projections do not consider the rate of sites being secured.

- This trend is already evident. In 2003 and 2004, NNSA secured more vulnerable material than in any other two-year period since the program began.

NNSA Has Shown Steady Progress Since 9/11

- NNSA's latest material inventories show that roughly the same amount of material was secured in the two years before and after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

- Some private reports that suggest otherwise are using preliminary estimates that are now out of date.

- On average, the design, installation, and testing of security upgrades take between one and two years to complete. The benefits of NNSA's post-9/11 acceleration efforts were realized in 2003 and 2004.

- More material was secured in these two years than in any other two-year period since the program began.

Established by Congress in 2000, NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear energy. NNSA maintains and enhances the safety, security, reliability and performance of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile without underground nuclear testing; works to reduce global danger from weapons of mass destruction; provides the U.S. Navy with safe and effective nuclear propulsion; and responds to nuclear and radiological emergencies in the U.S. and abroad.

October 2004

NA-04-FS02

###